

Register of Historic Kansas Places

Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating individual properties and districts. The format is similar to the National Register of Historic Places form. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets. Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Pearson, Robert Hall, FarmOther name/site number Evergreen Stock Farm / 045-0000-0389

2. Location

Street & number 163 E. 2000 Rd.☐ not for publicationCity or town Baldwin City☒ vicinityState KansasCode KSCounty DouglasCode 045Zip code 66006

3.,4. Certification

I hereby certify that this property is listed in the Register of Historic Kansas Places.

Christy Davis9/14/05

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	buildings
		sites
<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	structures
		objects
<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter Categories from instructions)

Domestic: Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Vacant/Not In Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: National Folk

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: Stone

Walls: Weatherboard

Roof: Wood shingle

Other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the State Register)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Settlement

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance

c. 1886-1906

Significant Dates

c. 1886

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67)
has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 39.24 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	Zone	Easting	Northing

3	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	Zone	Easting	Northing

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Dale E. Nimz

Organization _____ Date May 19, 2005

Street & number P.O. Box 1046 Telephone 785-842-8992

City or town Lawrence State KS Zip code 66044

Property Owner

Name Black Jack Battlefield Trust, c/o Brenda Day, President

Street & number P.O. Box 65 Telephone 785-594-8380 (w) 869-2870 (h)

City or town Baldwin City State KS Zip code 66006

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Robert Hall Pearson Farm
Douglas Co., Kansas

Architectural Description

The old Robert Hall Pearson property is a picturesque site with irregular terrain cut by two branches of the upper drainage of Captains Creek. The house, a well, and associated outbuildings are located on a ridge overlooking a small tributary to the north and a county road to the east. The lane to the house lot from the road is lined with several mature cedar trees on either side. A barn, silo, well, and stockpens are located on a higher ridge northwest of the house across another creek tributary. A stone flat-arched culvert supports the lane that leads to the barn. There is a spring and dry laid stone water trough northwest of the house beside the stream separating the house and barn lots.

The old Robert Hall Pearson house is the most significant remaining farm building. Despite two small additions, this late nineteenth century building possesses good architectural integrity. Because its original location, contemporary setting, well-preserved design, materials, and workmanship convey a sense of the past, the feelings and associations that provide a vivid sense of past time and place are evident. Generally, the exterior and interior details and interior plan of the Pearson House are intact. Other farm buildings are deteriorated and date from the early twentieth century or later.

Although the Pearson house appears to be the only building with good architectural integrity, other significant features include the two historic hand-dug wells with laid stone linings. One well is located near the house and another is located near the barn. The spring north of the house has a dry stone trough approximately seven feet long tapering from three feet wide on the west to five feet wide on the east. This spring is associated with the site's history as a Santa Fe Trail campsite and the Black Jack Battlefield.

Architectural history

The distinguishing architectural features of the Pearson House are representative of the National Folk architectural style. This example has a gable front façade with a central entrance and a massed plan two rooms wide arranged around a central interior chimney. The house is an example of a vernacular type associated with the art of designing and constructing buildings to serve human needs.

As railroads built across the United States after 1850, local builders were no longer restricted to local materials. The spread of the railroad dramatically increased the variety and availability of building materials. During the late nineteenth century period of agricultural dominance in Kansas, wood was the preferred building material. Wooden dwellings constructed with light balloon framing covered by wood sheathing became the most common building form. Sawed lumber, nails, as well as factory-produced doors, windows, and moldings became widely available. The products transported on the railroad system "changed the traditional building materials and construction techniques of folk dwellings over much of the nation."¹ The Pearson house is a well-preserved example of this fundamental change.

¹ Virginia and Lee McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 89.

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In Palmyra Township, very few buildings from the territorial and the Civil War period (1854-1865) have survived. Properties from the period of the county's early development (1866-1893) are almost as rare. Generally, properties from the nineteenth century have been replaced or considerably altered. The Pearson House probably was constructed in 1886 when the tax assessment for this eighty-acre tract increased by more than twenty percent. A residence in the present location was recorded in the 1902 Standard Atlas of Douglas County as the "Evergreen Stock Farm." The Pearson farm plan and buildings are typical of a late nineteenth century eastern Kansas farm based on a diversified agriculture of stock-raising, grain cropping, and fruit-growing. Such agriculture required a number of specialized farm buildings and structures.

The largest number of historic resources identified in the historic preservation survey of Baldwin City and Palmyra Township date from the period of mature community development (1894-1930). A flourishing diversified agriculture, large rural population, stable schools and churches as well as growth in Baldwin City characterized this period.²

Changes to the Pearson house and the construction of the early twentieth-century outbuildings on the farm represent the rapid and important changes on Kansas farms caused by the mechanization of agricultural production and the spread of domestic technology. For example, Kansans added a piped water supply, electric and oil lighting, and new appliances to their farm homes. After 1930, new and improved farmhouses were constructed with different house forms, electricity, water heating and central heating. Also, grain and equipment storage buildings became more important on Kansas farms.³

Exterior

The Pearson House has a three-bay front gable façade with a central entrance. The main rectangular block is oriented east and west; it is approximately twenty-two feet wide and thirty-two feet long. The house is wood frame construction covered with lapped wooden weatherboard. This sheathing still retains many original cut nails. The main foundation is constructed of coursed, rock-faced limestone laid in an ashlar pattern.

The house is relatively unornamented. There is a wide fascia board with a corner molding at the joint and a projecting wooden cap on the building corner boards. The east entrance door and the first and second floor windows have projecting peaked ornamental hoods. On the roof, there are two ornamental metal lighting rods.

² Dale E. Nimz, "Historic Preservation Survey and Research Report, Baldwin City and Palmyra Township, Douglas County, Kansas," Prepared for the Kansas Historic Preservation Department, Topeka, Kansas (September 30, 1989), 5.

³ Daniel D. Holt, Kansas Preservation Plan: Study Unit on a Time of Contrasts: Progress, Prosperity, and the Great Depression, 1900-1940 (Topeka, KS: Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, 1990), 32-38.

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The entrance has a four-panel wooden screen door. The first floor windows have wooden 2/2 double-hung sash. The second floor windows in the north and south facades also have 2/2 double-hung sash. In the north and south facades, there are smaller 2/2 windows. These windows have wooden screens. There are small paired hatch windows in the north and south cellar walls.

There is a shed-roofed one-room rear addition (ca. 1920) approximately eleven feet long and twenty one feet wide. The addition is wood frame construction covered with weatherboard. The addition has a rough concrete foundation with concrete steps to the rear entrance. There is a glazed, paneled wooden entrance door with a wooden storm door and an adjacent 2/2 wooden double-hung window. In the west end wall, there are paired 2/2 wooden double-hung windows to the north and a single window to the south.

Interior

The interior plan, ornamentation, doors and windows, walls, ceilings, and floors of the Pearson house have good physical integrity. Generally, the interior plan is intact. There are four rooms on the first floor and three bedrooms on the second floor. Original wood lath and plaster walls and ceilings remain. Wooden baseboards, window and door moldings, hook rails, and wainscoting are intact. Wooden floors remain although they are covered in the first floor rooms.

The massed plan is two rooms wide arranged around a central interior chimney. The front entrance opens directly into a main north parlor approximately thirteen feet wide and fifteen feet long with an adjacent room seven feet, six inches wide. There is a projecting brick chimney in the southwest corner of the parlor. The large kitchen in the southwest is approximately twelve feet wide and fifteen feet long. A rear stair hall separates the kitchen from a pantry and a bathroom to the north approximately five feet, six inches wide. The cellar stair is located under the second floor stair. The rear entrance now leads to a one-room addition.

The front wooden entrance door is surmounted with a glazed transom. The entrance door has a single recessed panel above a glazed panel and three lower recessed panels. The wooden passage door to the side parlor has four recessed panels. Ornamental door and window hardware and porcelain door knobs appear to be original. The front parlor also is ornamented with recessed molded panels under both windows and a circular plaster molding centered in the ceiling. There is a wide wooden painted baseboard. One original piece of the ornamental cap molding remains in the northeast corner of the main parlor. Door and window casings are unornamented and painted.

In the side parlor, there is one original piece of quarter-round molding on the baseboard in the southwest corner. There also is a board hook rail in the southwest corner of the room. A wooden passage door to the kitchen has four recessed panels.

In the kitchen, the side entrance door has a large glazed panel with two recessed panels. On the two interior walls, there is painted vertical beaded board wainscoting with a molded cap. A board hook rail

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is mounted on the interior wall next to the stair hall. There is an original exterior window opening in the west wall above a sink.

The stair rises from a rear hall with a center ell hall leading to the front bedrooms. The stair railing has rectangular spindles, a heavy chamfered handrail, and a large square end post.

There are three bedrooms on the second floor corresponding in size to the main first floor rooms. The northeast bedroom is approximately eleven feet wide and fifteen feet long. The southeast bedroom is nine feet, six inches wide. There is a closet at the south end of the ell. The southwest bedroom opens directly from the stair hall. It is approximately twelve feet wide and eleven feet long.

The second floor rooms have original wooden tongue and grooved flooring approximately five inches wide. Although worn, the original dark stained finish remains on the flooring in the hall and bedrooms. The southeast bedroom has linoleum over the flooring and painted woodwork. The second floor rooms have a wide unornamented baseboard with quarter round molding at the floor. The dark stained wooden doors have four recessed panels. There is a metal floor heating grate in the northeast bedroom. Each of the rooms has a central light fixture in the ceiling.

There is a cellar under the entire original block. The wooden cellar door constructed of vertical boards and battens with ingenious double hinged sections designed to fold out against the wall. On the interior, the door and casing have original dark stain. There is an open wooden cellar stair. Interior cellar walls are unplastered and there is a concrete floor. A central brick chimney footing also supports wooden beams and floor joists. The attic interior reveals the roof construction of butted paired rafters without a ridgeboard. The rear one-room addition has plasterboard walls and a concrete floor.

Alterations

Alterations include new sawn shingle roofing. This was installed on plywood sheathing over the original spaced roofing boards. There is modern wooden crown molding at the cornice and aluminum attic vents in both the east and west gable ends. The chimney has a modern clay tile flue lining.

The bathroom window in the center of the north façade has been replaced and the opening reduced. Both of the small cellar windows to the north have been covered. There are modern metal window awnings on the west windows of the rear addition.

There is a modern enclosed porch addition on the south side of the main block. This addition is approximately seven feet wide and sixteen feet long. It is wood frame construction with a shed roof. There are wooden entrance and storm doors, an upper bank of screened windows, and lower plywood panels.

Interior alterations include the removal of a passage door from the front parlor to the stair hall. Modern plywood paneling has been installed on the walls in both front parlors and the kitchen. There also is

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vinyl flooring on the floors. There are modern ceiling fans in both front rooms. Modern cabinets have been installed in the kitchen. The pantry has modern plywood paneling on the walls. The bathroom has been remodeled. The lath and plaster ceiling on the second floor has been damaged because of former roof leaks.

Outbuildings and features

There are several buildings and structures near the house as well as a lane and culvert leading northwest to a barn, silo, and stockpens.

A deteriorated wood frame garage is located northwest of the house. This is a rectangular wood frame structure with a gable roof and a shed-roofed side bay. The well directly south of the house has a raised concrete cap and a laid stone lining. Other structures south of the house include a deteriorated rectangular brick trough and chimney (reportedly a maple syrup cooker), a wood frame poultry house with a stone foundation and a stone foundation wall. The deteriorated poultry house is rectangular with a gable roof and an ell end addition. The building has vertical board sheathing and corrugated metal sheathing. The ell addition is covered with corrugated metal sheathing. The addition has a rough field stone foundation with cement mortar. North of the poultry house, an ell-shaped foundation wall is constructed of similar material surmounted by a poured concrete wall section.

A flat-arched culvert supports the lane to the barn and silo. The culvert is constructed of rough field stone with cement mortar. The pier forming the west side of the culvert has cracked and shifted to the south.

There is a barn, silo, and stockpens on a ridge northwest of the house. Another hand-dug well is located southeast of the barn. The well is lined with laid stone and surmounted with a concrete cap with a cast iron hand pump. Such a feature suggests the possibility that an earlier barn from the same period as the Pearson house was constructed on this site. The existing barn is deteriorated. It is a rectangular wooden pole frame structure with a gable roof oriented north and south and two adjacent shed bays with aisles in the shed bays. The front is covered with vertical board sheathing and there is corrugated metal roofing and sheathing on the sides and rear. The tall circular silo is constructed of hollow clay tile with a stone and cement mortar foundation.

Alterations

There are two modern outbuildings southeast of the Pearson house. One is a deteriorated shed-roofed outbuilding (possibly a hoghouse) to the east. This is a rectangular pole frame building oriented east-west with a low shed roof covered by corrugated metal roofing. Next to this structure stands a trailer house on block piers oriented east and west. The trailer is rectangular with a flat roof and metal sheathing.

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Significance

Summary

The Robert Hall Pearson farm and residence, located at 163 E. 2000 Road, Douglas County, Kansas, is eligible for listing in the Register of Historic Kansas Places under Criterion A for its association with the settlement and community development of Douglas County. The farm and farm residence may be significant in the area of social history for its association with the commemoration and historical memory of the Battle of Black Jack, a significant event in the armed struggle of free state against pro-slavery settlers to determine the future political development of Kansas Territory. The farm residence is also eligible for listing under Criterion C as a significant example of a late nineteenth century vernacular house type with good architectural integrity, both exterior and interior. This property has previously been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an amendment (boundary increase) to the Black Jack Battlefield nomination. The house and outbuildings were considered noncontributing resources to the nomination because they postdate the period of significance (1856). If the house is restored to its original appearance, it may be eligible for National Register listing as a good example of a late 19th century farmhouse.

Elaboration

The Robert Hall Pearson farm (ca. 1886) is associated with the period of rural agricultural dominance outlined in the Kansas Preservation Plan. In the decades following the Civil War, most Kansans lived and worked on farms or lived in small communities supported by agriculture. Many of those who were not directly involved in farming depended on agricultural trade and production for their livelihood. The economy of Kansas boomed in the 1880s and the population grew dramatically. Railroads and settlement spread across the entire state. The weather cycle generally was favorable, crop production flourished, and commodity prices were stable. The Pearson residence was constructed during this period of prosperity. The nominated property is 39.24 acres comprising the house, outbuildings, and other features remaining from the Pearson farm, a 240-acre farm recorded in the 1887 Edwards' Atlas of Douglas County.

The life of Robert Hall Pearson illustrated several important themes in national, state, and local history--immigration, industrialization, westward expansion, and "Bleeding Kansas." Robert Pearson and his brother Richard were pioneer settlers of Kansas. As the 1899 Portrait and Biographical Record concluded, "in spite of obstacles Mr. Pearson has had more than ordinary success. The task that lay before him when he came to Kansas was not an easy one. He took up a timber and squatter's claim and was forced to defend his rights by the aid of his gun, against as many as five or six men at one time. In the end, however, troubles of that kind gave way to prosperity."⁴ The Pearson residence is the tangible symbol of the prosperity and success achieved by Kansas pioneer Robert Hall Pearson.

⁴ Portrait and Biographical Record of Leavenworth, Douglas, and Franklin Counties, Kansas (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1899), 339-340.

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In the spring of 1860, R. H. Pearson bought the northwest quarter (160 acres) of Section 12, Township 15 South, Range 20 East. The original Pearson residence was shown in the center of this tract in the 1873 Atlas of Douglas County.⁵⁶ Robert Pearson bought the south half of the northwest quarter of Section 12 (80 acres) late in 1877. C. E. Munger was recorded as the owner in the Palmyra Township tax roll, but R. H. Pearson paid the taxes on December 6, 1877. Pearson was recorded as the owner in subsequent years. Catherine Baysinger Pearson, Robert's first wife, died December 4, 1878, and a few years later Robert married Rosella Harris February 7, 1884.

After their marriage, it appears that Robert and Rosella Pearson established a new home on the land which included the Black Jack Battlefield site. The assessed tax value on the 80-acre tract in the south half of the northwest quarter of Section 12 increased from \$300 in 1885 to \$370 in 1886. This abrupt increase of more than twenty per cent suggests that the Pearson house was constructed. Robert Pearson lived in the house until his death in 1906. Then Pearson's daughter Fannie and her husband, Hardin Cavender, acquired the property. Because of the association with the development of Palmyra Township, Douglas County, and the significance of the residence as an example of a property type, the period of significance dates from ca. 1886 to 1906.

Chronology

The Pearson family came to Allegheny, Pennsylvania in the United States from Yorkshire, England in 1832 when Robert was four years old. His mother's maiden name was Hall. After employment in cotton factories for five years, Robert Hall Pearson learned the trade of coach body builder and worked for six years in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, St. Louis, Missouri, and Keokuk, Iowa. In the winter of 1851-1851, he traveled to California by the Isthmus of Panama route. Pearson "engaged in placer mining in the southern mines, meeting with fair success."⁷

Robert Pearson returned to Pennsylvania by the Isthmus of Panama route in April, 1854. According to Robert's eldest son, William F. Pearson, when Robert heard that "the Kansas territory was coming into market, he decided to seek a home there." Robert Pearson traveled by boat from Pittsburgh to St. Louis, then to St. Joseph. He entered Kansas at Wyandotte, but federal troops drove him back to Weston, Missouri. There he waited for news from Fort Leavenworth about the ratification of the Kansas Nebraska Act. Before Congress approved the act, Pearson and four companions went into Kansas to

⁵ Frederick W. Beers, Atlas of Douglas County (New York, NY: F.W. Beers & Co., 1873), 68.
⁶

⁷ The outline of Robert Hall Pearson's life is based on three biographical sketches which agree on main points but offer different details: "W. F. Pearson Tells of the Days of 70 Years Ago, Wellsville Globe 16 January 1930; A. T. Andreas, History of Kansas (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1883), 308, 310, 358; Portrait and Biographical Record of Leavenworth, Douglas, and Franklin Counties, Kansas (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1899), 339-340.

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hunt for land claims. Pearson chose a site adjoining the settlement of Palmyra just north of the present location of Baldwin City in Douglas County.⁸

Robert Pearson's younger brother, Richard, also came to Kansas in 1855 and settled on a claim near Baldwin City. The Pearson brothers were some of the first settlers in Palmyra Township. Robert and Richard Pearson were recorded as voters in the poll book of Palmyra Precinct participating in the election of delegates to the first territorial constitutional convention. Robert Pearson was one of three election judges.⁹ Robert Pearson was one of the twelve men who organized the Palmyra Town Company.

Because Robert Pearson's first claim in Douglas County was located within the boundaries of a tract of land reserved for the Shawnee Indians, he later abandoned it and claimed another tract not far away just outside the Shawnee reserve boundaries. It was not easy to hold the claim, "as pro-slavery men made repeated efforts to drive him away; however, he had as much courage and more determination than they, so succeeded in holding the property until 1860, when he sold it."¹⁰

In the spring of 1860, Robert Hall Pearson bought the northwest quarter of Section 12, Township 15 South, Range 20 East. This property was located on the old Santa Fe Trail between Black Jack and Baldwin City. Two stage routes passed through Black Jack, one from Paola to Lawrence and the other from Kansas City to Lawrence. Mexican freighters also were very common. These teams were drawn by ox teams and averaged 50 wagons to the train. Robert Pearson's eldest son, William, recalled that the family moved from north of Baldwin to near Black Jack on March 1. "Black Jack was then a small station of two stores, a hotel, two blacksmith shops, a wagon shop and a stage stand." The Black Jack post office was established on March 15, 1858 and the community has a store, church, and school by 1859.¹¹ Palmyra Township had a population of 1,516 in 1860.¹²

Robert Pearson married Catherine Baysinger on September 23, 1855. It was the first marriage in Palmyra Township. They had nine children that survived to adulthood--William, George, Ann, Robert Sigel, Edward, Fannie, Elizabeth, Nettie, and Fred. Three other children died at an early age. According to a 1899 biographical sketch, William Pearson was a machinist living in Wellsville, Kansas. George was a farmer in Oklahoma. Ann had married Charles Stover. Robert Sigel was a farmer living near Pomona, Kansas. Edward lived on the home farm. Fannie had married Hardin Cavender.

⁸ Pearson made his claim under the Preemption Act of 1841 which provided for the sale of public land to any "squatter" over twenty-one who resided on the land and make improvements. The Act allowed squatters to purchase the land upon which they had settled at the minimum price of \$1.25 per acre before it was auctioned to the public. This preceded the Homestead Act of 1862, which gave public land to actual settlers at no cost.

⁹ House Report No. 200, "Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas," 34th Congress, 1st Session, 718, 761.

¹⁰ Portrait and Biographical Record, 339-340.

¹¹ Robert W. Baughman, Kansas Post Offices (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1961), 13; Baldwin Ledger centennial edition (October, 1970).

¹² A. T. Andreas, History of Kansas (Chicago, IL: A. T. Andreas), 308.

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Elizabeth was a nurse living in Topeka, Kansas. Nettie married Walter Scott. Fred was a farmer in Palmyra Township.

Robert Hall Pearson was a life-long Republican as well as a member of the Grange, the Baldwin City G.A.R. Post and the I.O.O.F. Lodge Number 31. His brother, Richard Pearson, returned to Kansas following his Civil War service and began farming south of Black Jack where he lived in Franklin County until he died in 1896.

Robert Pearson was born April 1, 1828 and died in 1906. Catherine Baysinger Pearson lived from 1837 to December 4, 1878. A few years later, Robert Pearson married Rosella Harris February 7, 1884. She lived from 1835 to 1912. Robert Pearson, his two wives, his father, four adult sons, and three children who died at an early age, are all buried in the family plot in Oakwood Cemetery, Baldwin City. Originally, Pearson bought a cemetery lot August 29, 1864, in Pioneer Cemetery, one half mile north. After the new Oakwood Cemetery was established in 1870, many memorial stones and human remains were moved to the Oakwood Cemetery.¹³

The settlement and community development of Douglas County was founded on agriculture and the Pearson farm was typical. Local agriculture changed from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. In 1875 corn was the predominant grain crop in Douglas County. There were 70,000 acres of corn planted and only 2,000 acres of wheat. From 1880 to 1900, however, more and more wheat was produced although corn was still favored by a ratio of 2 or 3 to 1. A significant acreage of oats was planted and the acreage did not vary much in the late nineteenth century. Timothy was the most popular variety of cultivated hay, although the volume of fenced and unfenced prairie hay was much greater. Alfalfa first appeared in 1895, but only 44 acres were planted. By 1915 more than 15,000 acres of alfalfa were planted. Timothy hay was no longer mentioned.

By 1882 Robert Pearson was described as a farmer living on 240 acres of land "devoted to grain and stock, also to fruit raising, have an apple orchard of over 600 bearing trees, besides pears and other fruits to which he has devoted considerable attention."¹⁴ In 1889, the editor of the Baldwin Ledger reported June 21, "R. H. Pearson brought to this office this week some of the finest specimens of grain we ever saw. The rye which was in full head and well developed was five feet ten inches high. Meadow oatgrass very healthy and six feet high. Among the rest were three varieties of wheat ranging from three and a half to four and half feet high. The oats was considerably over four feet high and well headed. And this is the kind of crops we are raising in Kansas this year. Truly we live in a land favored by providence." Only two months later, the Ledger noted that Pearson had returned from a trip to Milwaukee and other Wisconsin towns. "He attended the G.A.R. encampment and spent several days

¹³ Complete Tombstone Census of Douglas County, Kansas Volume 2. B. Jean Snedegar, chair. (Lawrence, KS: Douglas County Genealogical Society, 1989), 195, 218, 268.

¹⁴ Andreas, History of Kansas, 358.

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fishing on the lakes. He says he had a grand good time and enjoyed it so well that he feels well paid for the expense of the trip."¹⁵

By the end of the nineteenth century, basic patterns of Kansas agriculture were established. Diversified agriculture and corn production were strong in eastern Kansas. Wheat production was more important in the central and western part of Kansas. The buildings and features on the Pearson farm--house, barns, outbuildings, trees and hedges, fences, and wells--are the building types typical of this period.¹⁶

The Pearson House in the present location on Section 12, Township 15, Range 20 was recorded in the 1902 Standard Atlas of Douglas County as the "Evergreen Stock Farm." After Robert Hall Pearson died in 1906, Fannie and Hardin Cavender were recorded as the owners of the south half of the northwest quarter of Section 12 in the 1907 tax roll. Lizzie Pearson was recorded as the owner of the original part of the Pearson farm, the northwest quarter of Section 12, and Robert S. Pearson paid the taxes. The 1909 plat and survey of Douglas County recorded L. Pearson as the owner of the northwest quarter, but no residence. A residence and the owners F. and H. Cavender were recorded on the south half of the northeast quarter of Section 12.

The most important change in agriculture in Palmyra Township and Douglas County was the substitution of mechanical fossil-fueled power for horsepower in the early twentieth century. In Douglas County, a peak of 11,336 horses and 2,292 mules was reached in 1915. The number of horses and mules on farms fell rapidly afterwards as steam engines and tractors became more effective and widely used.¹⁷

Fanny and Harden Cavender and their children lived on the property throughout the twentieth century. When Harden Cavender died on April 6, 1928, his heirs were Fannie, his wife, John W. and Dana P. Cavender, his sons, Anna B. Miller, Josephine Drew, Bernice H. Allison, and Edna G. Kersey, his daughters.¹⁸ Fannie Cavender deeded the south half of the northeast quarter of Section 12 to Dana, James, and William E. Cavender on April 20, 1955. Dana Cavender lived in the old Pearson house until he died in 2000. The Cavender descendants subdivided the south half of the northeast quarter of Section 12 in 2003. Finally, the Lawrence Preservation Alliance acquired the east half of the tract and deeded the property to the Black Jack Battlefield Trust on June 20, 2004. The Trust is developing a historic preservation master plan for the property.

Commemoration: The Battle of Black Jack

¹⁵ "Local Jottings," Baldwin Ledger 21 June 1889, p. 3, col. 3; Baldwin Ledger 13 September 1899, p. 3, col. 2.

¹⁶ Kansas Preservation Plan: Study Unit on the Period of Rural-Agricultural Dominance, 1865-1900 (Topeka, KS: Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, 1984); Holt, Daniel D. Kansas Preservation Plan: Study Unit on a Time of Contrasts: Progress, Prosperity, and the Great Depression, 1900-1940 (Topeka, KS: Historic Preservation Department, Kansas State Historical Society, 1990), 32-38.

¹⁷ Nimz, "Historic Preservation Survey, Palmyra Township," (1989), 5-6.

¹⁸ Affidavit #64839, recorded 26 April 1982 (Book 355, Page 661), Deed Records, Douglas County.

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In Pearson's mature years, he and his second wife chose to build their home overlooking the site of one of the most important events in Pearson's early life as a pioneer settler of Douglas County, Kansas. As a young man of 28, Pearson participated in the Battle of Black Jack on June 2, 1856. He later owned and lived on the farm where the battle was fought.

Historian A. T. Andreas wrote that Pearson took an active part in "the ranks of the free-state party." Serving in Captain Shore and Captain Dexter's companies, Pearson participated in the battles of Franklin, Black Jack, and the defense of Lawrence.¹⁹ According to Pearson's personal recollection, a band of Missouri border ruffians raided southern Douglas County in May, 1856. The ruffians intended to drive the free-state settlers out of the county and make Kansas a slave state. Free State settlers mobilized to defend themselves and "determined to clear the country of these ruffians." After the border ruffians looted the settlement of Palmyra, on Sunday June 1, six scouts approached the Prairie City church. Robert Hall Pearson, who was on guard outside the service, fired at them. Two ruffians surrendered in surprise and four others fled. Pearson and other free-state men in Captain Samuel T. Shore's company joined John Brown and his men to pursue the Missourians. On June 2, they "found the enemy encamped near the headwaters of Black Jack Creek, and three quarters of a mile west of the village of that name."²⁰ The battleground was approximately six miles northeast of Prairie City.²¹ After fighting for a few hours, John Brown insisted that the pro-slavery commander, Captain Henry Pate, surrender and he did. Brown planned to exchange the pro-slavery men for two of his sons who had been captured earlier. However, Colonel Sumner and a company of United States cavalry arrived on the scene, took custody of Pate and his men, and later released the pro-slavery men.

During the Civil War, Robert Hall Pearson served in the Kansas state militia under Colonel Nugent (Infantry Company F, Division 9) and took part in the pursuits of William Quantrill and General Sterling Price. According to another account, Robert served in the Missouri Home Guard before transferring to the Ninth Kansas Infantry. When the war broke out, Richard Pearson also left Palmyra Township and went East to join the Union Army.

Although the Black Jack battleground was shown on the Edwards Map of Douglas County as early as 1887, the site first was marked by a large red granite monument erected at the Black Jack community on October 1, 1913. The marker was erected on the farm of Floyd Kalb and faced the ravine where Captain Pate encamped. The dedication ceremony was coordinated with the annual gathering of old settlers. In a speech Dr. W. F. Osborne, chairman of the fundraising committee, called attention to the first real pitched battle of the Civil War. Local residents George Roe, F. P. Varnum, and W.E. Barnes, who were at the battle or arrived in time to witness the surrender, were honored guests at the dedication. After the ceremony, a picnic dinner was served for over two hundred people in the Hays grove a quarter

¹⁹ Andreas, History of Kansas, 358.

²⁰ Robert H. Pearson, personal account of Battle of Black Jack, reprinted in Baldwin Ledger 9 June 1938; G. W. E. Griffiths, "The Battle of Black Jack," Kansas Historical Collections 16 (1923-1925), 524-525..

²¹ After the Civil War, Baldwin City, just northeast of the territorial settlement of Prairie City, became the leading town in Palmyra Township.

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of mile from the monument.²² By 1930 the community of Black Jack was gone and only a country school house, church building, and cemetery remained on the site.

In 1940 local residents again acknowledged the battle of Black Jack. W. C. Simons, prominent editor of the Lawrence Journal-World, emphasized, "as a result of the Battle of Black Jack,... the U. S. government stepped in to prevent further law breaking by either proslavery or anti-slavery parties, and the Freestaters soon prevailed and Kansas came into the Union a free state. Without the troubles between the opposing forces in Kansas coming to a head in actual warfare, the federal government probably would not have intervened and the border warfare might have been indefinitely prolonged." Simons concluded with the admonition, "we are here today enjoying the bounties of Kansas because men and women risked their all that Kansas might be free. They sacrificed security and comfort to make a free state and nation... What our forebears fought to gain, we should fight to preserve."²³

Memory of the battle has outlived the pioneer community of Black Jack. The last historic building identifying Black Jack was lost in the 1960s. Early in 1964, the Black Jack Community Club held a final meeting February 16 to decide whether to raze the old church building and sell the property. Although several members of the club tried to raise funds for renovating the building, the final decision was to demolish this community landmark.²⁴

²² "Dedicate The Monument," Baldwin Ledger 3 October 1913, p. 1, col. 1.

²³ W. C. Simons, "Significance of the Battle of Black Jack," Dedication address at commemoration of Battle of Black Jack. Lawrence Journal-World 9 October 1940.

²⁴ "Black Jack's Future To Be Decided Sun.," Baldwin Ledger 13 February 1964.

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